

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 114842
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HELSINKI FOR LESLIE H. GELB

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TAGS: PARM, US, UR, SALT

SUBJECT: MAY 5 "WASHINGTON POST" ARTICLE ON SALT

1. TWO ARTICLES APPEARED MAY 5 IN NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST REGARDING SALT WHICH YOU MAY FIND OF INTEREST. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF POST ARTICLE BY MURREY MARDER. TEXT OF RICHARD BURT ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES FOLLOWING SEPTTEL.

- THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE AGREED TENTATIVELY TO LIMIT THEIR ARSENALS OF INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES AND BOMBERS TO A LEVEL 6 PER CENT LOWER THAN THE TARGET CEILINGS SET FOUR YEARS AGO, FROM 2,400 ON EACH SIDE TO 2,250.

- THIS IS LESS THAN THE 10 PER CENT CUTBACK THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1976 HAS SOUGHT AS A MINIMUM REDUCTION IN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 114842

FORCE LEVELS. BUT IT WILL REQUIRE A REDUCTION OF ABOUT 250 IN EXISTING NUMBERS OF SOVIET LONG-RANGE MISSILES AND STRATEGIC BOMBERS, AND NO CUTBACKS FOR THE UNITED STATES, WHICH IS BELOW THE CEILING.

- THE TWO NATIONS ALSO HAVE AGREED TENTATIVELY TO AN AMERICAN-PROPOSED SUB-LIMIT OF 1,200 ON MISSILES WITH

MULTIPLE WARHEADS. THIS WOULD PERMIT THE UNITED STATES TO DEPLOY WITHOUT PENALTY 120 B52 BOMBERS OR OTHER AIRCRAFT ARMED WITH LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES, IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS A TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE.

- THESE IMPORTANT -- BUT LIMITED -- STEPS FORWARD IN THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS (SALT) WERE CONFIRMED YESTERDAY BY ADMINISTRATION SOURCES. IN TERMS OF THE TOTALITY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THIS TRADE-OFF BETWEEN AMERICAN AND SOVIET DEMANDS RESOLVES SEVERAL OF THE LEAST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES BLOCKING CONCLUSION OF A NEW PACT TO LIMIT OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC WEAPONS UNTIL 1985.

- MORE DIFFICULT OBSTACLES MUST BE OVERCOME BEFORE THERE CAN BE A SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND SOVIET PRESIDENT LEONID I. BREZHNEV TO PUT THE FINAL SEAL ON A SALT II AGREEMENT.

- THE INITIAL DISCLOSURE OF THE LATEST FORWARD MOVEMENT WAS MADE YESTERDAY BY THE NEW YORK TIMES. NUMEROUS ADMINISTRATION SOURCES COMPLAINED IN PRIVATE THAT THE FORM OF THE DISCLOSURE IMPLIED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD MADE MOST OF THE CONCESSIONS TO PRODUCE THE ADVANCE, WHICH THEY STRONGLY DISPUTED.

- "THEIR (THE SOVIET) PROGRAM IS PINCHED MORE THAN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 114842

OURS--AND PINCHED IN SIGNIFICANT WAYS," SAID ONE ADMINISTRATION SOURCE. THAT CLAIM, IN TURN, HOWEVER, WAS QUESTIONED BY AT LEAST ONE LEADING CRITIC OF ADMINISTRATION NEGOTIATING STRATEGY, PAUL NITZE, FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

- NITZE CONTENTED, AND NUMEROUS ADMINISTRATION SPECIALISTS STRONGLY DISAGREED, THAT "THE DEAL IS LOOKING LESS AND LESS GOOD" FOR THE UNITED STATES. ON THE CONTRARY, OTHERS CONTENTED, THE UNITED STATES IS EDGING TOWARDS ITS GOALS.

- THE NEWEST DISPUTE DEMONSTRATED THE HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL NATURE OF THE EXTREMELY COMPLEX NUCLEAR BARGAINING THAT HAS BEEN UNDER WAY SINCE THE SALT I ACCORDS OF 1972. THE POTENTIAL TREATY WOULD REPLACE THE LIMITATIONS ON AMERICAN-SOVIET OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC MISSILES THAT RAN OUT LAST OCTOBER, AND WHICH BOTH SIDES ARE HONORING PENDING A NEW AGREEMENT.

- ADMINISTRATION CIVILIAN ADVOCATES OF NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL INDICATED THAT THEY WERE QUITE PLEASED WITH THE

LATEST STEP FORWARD, WHICH RESULTS FROM SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE'S TALKS IN THE KREMLIN LAST MONTH.

MILITARY SPECIALISTS IN THE PENTAGON ARE LESS PLEASED; THEY SOUGHT A LARGER CUTBACK IN SOVIET NUCLEAR WEAPONRY.

- BOTH FACTIONS AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THE THORNIEST ISSUES ARE STILL AHEAD. THEY INCLUDE LIMITATIONS ON DEPLOYING NEW MISSILE SYSTEMS, WITH THE SOVIET UNION PRESSING HARD FOR AN EXEMPTION TO ALLOW IT A MAJOR NEW TYPE OF MISSILE; BASIC DISAGREEMENT ON LIMITING THE SOVIET BOMBERS KNOWN AS BACKFIRE; DISAGREEMENT ON MEASURING CRUISE MISSILE RANGES, AND ON THE DURATION OF SOME OF THE LIMITATIONS IN A TREATY PROTOCOL.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 114842

- UNDER THE TERMS FOR A SALT II ACCORD WHICH WERE OUTLINED IN 1974 BETWEEN FORMER PRESIDENT FORD AND BREZHNEV AT VLADIVOSTOK, STRATEGIC ARMS CEILINGS WERE PROJECTED AT 2,400 NUCLEAR LAUNCHERS ON EACH SIDE--MISSILES AND BOMBERS COMBINED WITH A LIMIT OF 1,320 FOR ALL WEAPONS CARRYING MULTIPLE WARHEADS.

- THE LATTER LIMIT 1,320 STILL HOLDS IN THE CURRENT BARGAINING.

- FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER IN EARLY 1976 CAME WITHIN SIGHT OF AN ACCORD WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WOULD HAVE CUT THE TOTAL ARMS LEVELS ON EACH SIDE BY ABOUT 10 PERCENT, BUT KISSINGER WAS BLOCKED FROM COMPLETING THE DEAL.

- THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, SEEKING DEEPER CUTS, IN MARCH, 1977, PROPOSED A FORCE CUT TO 2,160 BY 1980; THE SOVIET UNION COUNTERPROPOSED A LEVEL OF 2,250 BY 1982.

- IT IS THE SOVIET FIGURE THAT HAS PREVAILED, IN ONE SENSE, BUT NOT IN ANOTHER. THE OVERALL FIGURE NOW TENTATIVELY SET WOULD BE AS THE SOVIET UNION WANTED, 2,250. BUT THE ARMS PACKAGE CEILINGS HAVE HAD A SERIES OF SUB-LIMITS ADDED TO THE AND THE SOVIET UNION CONCEDED TO A U.S. DEMAND FOR 1,200 ON MULTIPLE-WARHEAD MISSILES RATHER THAN THE 1,250 CEILING IT SOUGHT.

- IF THIS SUB-LIMIT HAD BEEN SET AT 1,250 THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED BY 50 IN THE NUMBERS OF AIRCRAFT IT COULD DEPLOY, ARMED WITH CRUISE MISSILES --UNLESS IT RETIRED INTERCONTINENTAL LAND OR SEA-BASED

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 114842

TO 25 OF THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED MISSILES. EACH AMERICAN B52 WILL CARRY 20 CRUISE MISSILES, WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO A PILOTLESS DRONE AIRCRAFT, WITH RANGE PERMITTED UP TO 2,500 KILOMETERS, OR 1,550 MILES, UNDER THE PENDING NEGOTIATIONS.

- CHAMPIONS OF THE NEW ACCORD THEREFORE CLAIMED SATISFACTION WITH THE OUTCOME, EVEN THOUGH THE TOTAL ARMS CEILING IS HIGHER THAN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION PREFERRED. THE UNITED STATES IS BELOW THE NUCLEAR ARMS CEILING OF 2,250 NOW SET--WHICH IS WHY THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO SETTLE FOR 2,160, OR EVEN 2,100.

- OFFICIALLY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION YESTERDAY DECLINED ANY SPECIFIC COMMENT ON ANY OF THESE NEW FIGURES. WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL SAID IN DENVER, WHERE THE PRESIDENT WAS VISITING, THAT "THERE ARE STILL TOUGH PROBLEMS TO BE WORKED OUT."

- HE SAID CARTER AND BREZHNEV MAY MEET IN WASHINGTON THIS SUMMER, BUT POWELL SAID THERE WILL BE A SUMMER MEETING ONLY "IF WE HAVE AN AGREEMENT OR ARE CLOSE TO ONE." CHRISTOPHER

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